

SnapShot



944th Fighter Wing, Luke Air Force Base, Arizona

July 2016 Newsletter



Headlines:

Luke steps toward awareness

Blended retirement system training now available

Reserve unit dominates at Hawgsmoke

Airmen pay tribute to Pulse victims

Master Sgt. Marta Turner, 69th Fighter Squadron NCO in-charge of personnel and administrative programs, and her husband Matt, participate in the Pride 5k hosted by the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender committee at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. June 24. June is LGBT Pride month. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Lausanne Kinder)



944th Fighter Wing Monthly SnapShot

www.944fw.afrc.af.mil

Bringing the Heat

July 2016

944 FW KEY LEADERS

Commander

Col. Kurt J. Gallegos

Vice Commander

Col. Bryan Cook

Command Chief

CMSgt. Rhonda L. Hutson

944th Fighter Wing Electronic Monthly SnapShot

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Senior Airman Daniel Myers, 944th Security Forces Squadron, guides fellow security forces members in mastering a defensive technique during a combatives course June 4, 2016 inside Hangar 999 at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. Myers is a certified combatives instructor for the course, now an annual requirement for security forces Airmen. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Nestor Cruz)

944 FW Mission

Train and provide combat
ready Airmen.

Anytime, Anywhere



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Command Commentary

Proud to serve with you

By Col. Kurt Gallegos, 944th Fighter Wing commander

I hope everyone had a safe and happy 4th of July holiday with family and friends.

We associate this holiday with parades, family reunions, barbecues, and fireworks. However, Independence Day is a federal holiday that commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, by the Continental Congress. The document declared that the thirteen American colonies regarded themselves as a new nation, the United States of America, and no longer part of the British Empire.

We have celebrated many 4th of July's since that day and this country has grown to be one of the most respected in the world. Your commitment to serve and protect our freedoms is admirable and I am proud to serve with you.

While participating in this year's summer



activities remember the quest for zero. We have had record breaking heat in Arizona this summer and this can be dangerous. Drink plenty of water and understand the seriousness of heat injuries. Please be responsible and enjoy your summer with safety in mind. We want to see you come back to work safe and in one piece.

Here at Luke Air Force Base we will not have a UTA this month, but our geographically separated units will conduct business as usual. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to those units and let them know how much we appreciate everything they do.

We are also in annual tour season and if you find yourself going somewhere other than home station, remember who you represent and conduct yourself in an appropriate manner. The ultimate compliment is to be invited back.

Work hard and have fun but please keep bringing the heat. Thank you, see you in August.

Senate confirms Goldfein as next AF chief of staff

By Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Command Information

WASHINGTON (AFNS)-Gen. David L. Goldfein was confirmed by the Senate as the Air Force's next chief of staff during a confirmation vote June 29.

Goldfein testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee during a hearing June 16, before they voted on his confirmation. When he was nominated in April, Goldfein said, "I pledge to serve our Airmen and their families unwaveringly and honor our remarkable heritage and legacy of integrity, service and excellence."

In his previous position as the Air Force's vice chief of staff, Goldfein presided over the Air Staff and served as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Requirements Oversight Council and Deputy Advisory Working Group.

The general received his commission from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1983 and has been assigned to numerous positions around the world.

Goldfein is slated to be sworn in at a small ceremony at the Pentagon on July 1.



Courtesy photo

CSAF letter to Airmen

By Gen. David L. Goldfein, U.S. Air Force chief of staff

Fellow Airmen, I am honored and humbled to serve as your 21st Chief of Staff. General and Mrs. Welsh led our Air Force with unwavering commitment through challenging times, preparing Airmen to boldly chart a course into the future. Dawn and I are excited to build upon their success over the next four years.

Our strength lies in you. Your extraordinary professionalism, commitment, and talent are an inspiration to me and to the Nation we serve. America relies on us to assure our allies and partners,

deter would-be aggressors, defend our homeland, and defeat our adversaries. From silo to surface, from sky to space – we deliver excellence as we fly, fight, and win.

We succeed or fail as a team. Our unfaltering excellence in air, space, and cyber is the oxygen the joint force breathes ... and the future demands we tackle problems together. As a team of Airmen – Active, Guard, Reserve, and Civilian – we'll engage in an ongoing dialogue about joint warfighting excellence and our role in combined arms, and I will count on your ideas to shape our future force.

Airmen have been breaking barriers since 1947. Thank you for honoring their legacy with your selfless and dedicated service to our Nation, ensuring we remain the world's greatest Air Force.



Wing News

Luke steps toward awareness

Story by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr., 944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs



Photo by Staff Sgt. Staci Miller

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz.-Building awareness of the impact that sexual assault has on victims, survivors and their families is an important issue for the U.S. Air Force and Luke AFB community.

This year's Department of Defense theme was, "Know Your Part! Do Your Part!"

In observance of Sexual Assault Awareness Month a Walk a Mile in Their Shoes contest took place promoting individual, squadron and wing support by participants counting the steps they walked throughout the month of April.

The event, held yearly in April, proved to be a success for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response office, the Luke AFB Integrated Delivery System and the tiger team planning committee for SAAM.

"The intent is to bring awareness to our community by active participation," said Evelyn Perez, Sexual Assault Response coordinator. "We provided participants with a cut-out tennis shoe and a pedometer."

Each cut-out, with name, squadron, duty phone, and decorating touches displayed progress on a wall by the SARC office during the month and support in taking a stand against sexual assault and acknowledging awareness.

The contest was based on the honor system and weekly step totals were gathered and submitted to the SAPR office.

This year winners included: Tech. Sgt. Barbara Plante, 944th Fighter Wing public affairs, as the female with the most steps, 675,225 total. Tech. Sgt. Karl Clymer, 56th Fighter Wing safety as the male with the most steps, 416,961 total. The 944 FW will have the honor of taking home the traveling trophy as the squadron with the most accumulated steps with 3,101,990.

"Tech. Sgt. Barbara Plante broke the female category record held since 2006," Perez said. "As for the squadron with the most accumulative steps the 944 FW hit it right out of the ballpark."

There were 120 participants, 20 more than last year. Individual winners as well the 944 FW will be recognized during June 7 wing stand-up. Winners will also receive certificates and prizes.

"The trouble we have had in the past is getting the word out to everyone about different events on base," said Jessica Maldonado, 944 FW interim Airman & Family Readiness liaison. "This year, I talked to people about it to help spread the word. I am very proud and honored to represent the 944 FW at the IDS. I am always encouraged when we are able to support our active-duty counterparts, and vice versa, to get the word out about such an important topic."

Maldonado, is a member of IDS and was part of the tiger team planning committee for SAAM. She has effectively established a Total Force Integration initiative with the base SAPR office and was instrumental in developing the 944 FW 16-member winning team this year. The most participation from the wing so far.

"Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" originated in California in 2001 by Frank Baird, a therapist and volunteer rape crisis advocate, who had observed that violence affects both men and women.

July 2016 promotions:

Congratulations to the following 944th Fighter Wing promotees

From Airman:

Airman First Class Trevor Kortman, 924 MXS

From Airman First Class:

Senior Airman Mathew Foy, 414 MXS

Senior Airman Jesse Krug, 924 MXS

Senior Airman Spring MerrillHaley, 924 MXS

From Senior Airman:

Staff Sgt. Markie Brown, 944 CES

Staff Sgt. Galen Goetter, 414 MXS

Staff Sgt. Susuan Liu, 944 MDS

Staff Sgt. Shaliqua Mccoy, 944 ASTS

Staff Sgt. German Palma, 944 FSS

Staff Sgt. Heriberto Rivas, 944 FSS

Staff Sgt. Joseph Sale, 944 CES

From Staff Sergeant:

Tech. Sgt. Aaron Baackes, 944 ASTS

Tech. Sgt. Candice Bullardnorwood, 944 ASTS

Tech. Sgt. Lysa Busalacchi, 944 ASTS

Tech. Sgt. Jason DeJesus, 944 FW

Tech. Sgt. Brandon Hollingsworth, 414 MXS

Tech. Sgt. Robert Lopez, 944 CES

Tech. Sgt. Melissa Trampota, 924 MXS

From Technical Sergeant:

Master Sgt. Megan Alvarado, 414 FG

Master Sgt. Simon Dimant, 944 FSS

Master Sgt. Kevin Galdamez, 414 MXS

Master Sgt. Victoria Hubbard, 414 MXS

Master Sgt. Lacey Stevens, 307 FS

BRINGING THE HEAT

944 FIGHTER WING



Blended retirement system training now available

By Tech. Sgt. Bryan Franks, Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Command Information

The U.S. Uniformed Services Blended Retirement System

At a Glance

Saving with the New Blended Retirement System
The Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act provides our military force with a modernized retirement plan built for retirement savings. Beginning in 2018, our service members can get **automatic and matching Thrift Savings Plan contributions** as well as **mid-career compensation incentives** in addition to monthly annuities for life. All service members under the current system are grandfathered into today's retirement system.

Today's Retirement System:
Annuity
2.5% x Years Served x Retired Pay Base after completing 20 years of service

1 Automatic and Matching Contributions
Automatic contributions are seen immediately

You Contribute	DD/ Auto Contribution	DD/ Member	Total
0%	1%	0%	1%
2%	1%	1%	2%
3%	1%	2%	3%
4%	1%	3%	4%
5%	1%	4%	5%

The DoD automatically contributes 1% of your basic pay to your Thrift Savings Plan after 60 days of service. You'll see matching contributions at the start of the completion of 20 years of service, or...
You're fully vested—it's yours to keep—as of the beginning of 3 years of service and goes with you when you leave.

2 Continuation Pay
Received at the mid-career point

3 Full Retired Pay Annuity
Received after completing 20 years of service

2% x Years Served x Retired Pay Base

Calculate your retired pay base by averaging the highest 36 months of basic pay. You'll gain this monthly annuity for life after completing 20 years of service.

Options for Collecting Your Retired Pay

Active Component Full retired pay annuity

Reserve Component Full retired pay annuity beginning at age 60

or

Lump sum with reduced retired pay
50% or 25% of monthly retired pay annuity (lump sum back up to 100% of full retirement age 60 in most cases).
*Could be earlier based on credited active service.

Effective Date of the New System

1

- After December 31, 2017: You'll be automatically enrolled in the Blended Retirement System.
- After December 31, 2005 but before January 1, 2018: You'll have the choice to enroll in the Blended Retirement System or remain in today's current retirement system.
- Before January 1, 2006: You'll be grandfathered and remain in today's current retirement system.

Your Retirement System
If you joined the service...

Additional information coming soon. Sources: Sections 631, 632, 633, and 634 of the Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act. Created 12/01/15

director. "Although the majority of Airmen serving today will not fall under BRS, it is important for all Airmen, either as leaders today, or as leaders tomorrow, to understand the changes that will impact Airmen in the future."

The BRS Leader Training is a 30-minute course designed to provide basic familiarity with the key components of the upcoming retirement system and the timeline for implementation. It is designed primarily for Air Force leaders at all levels, but is also open to all Airmen and others who wish to learn more about BRS.

"Education is key in providing Airmen the information they need in order to make informed decisions about the BRS," Kelly said. The Defense Department is on track to provide three additional courses with more detailed information within the next 18 months.

An "opt-in" course is targeted at those eligible to opt into the new system. This course will provide eligible active and reserve component members an understanding of both the current and new systems. The course will be available in January 2017.

A "train the trainer" course for personal financial managers, counselors and retirement services officers is targeted at those experts who serve in an advisory role to commanders, Airmen and their families. This course should be ready by fall of 2016.

A new accessions course targets individuals who enter military service on or after Jan. 1, 2018. It is intended to provide those members who enter service under the BRS an understanding of their blended retirement benefits and personal options.

The Air Force is taking a comprehensive approach to BRS education. "Online courses are designed to pro-

Warrior of the Month



Photo by Staff Sgt. Nestor Cruz

Senior Airman Susan Liu, 944th Medical Squadron medical logistics

Time in Service: 5 years

Time with the 944th Fighter Wing: 2 years

Civilian Job: Full-time orders with 944 MDS Command Support Staff

Hometown: Southeast Asia

Hobbies: Traveling

Commander's comments: Senior Airman Liu has done fantastic work for her squadron, filling in during a critical Air Reserve Technician manning shortage and providing expert administrative support, ensuring zero gaps in mission accomplishment, ensuring timely travel voucher submission and payments.

She went above and beyond, also becoming expert in Unit Training Assembly Participation System (UTAPS), Air Reserve Component Intranet (ARCNet), and Air Force Reserve Orders Writing System (AROWS-R), initiating over 100 military orders.

She also graduated with distinction at Mesa Community College, completed Airman Leadership School, and started Grand Canyon University with a 4.0 GPA.

Finally, Senior Airman Liu took over the squadron Emergency Management Program and took it from 30 percent to 86 percent compliance in short order.

Why did you join the Air Force Reserves? To try and make a difference.

How does your job support the mission of the 944th Fighter Wing? MDS cannot function without CSS

If you were on a deserted island...? Try to survive and get help.

vide basic knowledge and understanding," Kelly emphasized. "In addition to the aforementioned courses, Airmen will receive in-person education at various points in their career, starting in basic training, and professional counseling will also be available."

To learn more about the Blended Retirement System, visit militarypay.defense.gov.

Courtesy photo

WASHINGTON(AFNS)-Online training designed to educate Airmen about the new Blended Retirement System, the Defense Department system with changes on the current military retirement system, is now available via Joint Knowledge Online course number P-US1330. The course is also available to those without a Common Access Card -- to include family members -- via an alternate website.

The BRS was enacted into law in the Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, and will go into effect Jan. 1, 2018. All currently serving members are grandfathered into the current military retirement system. However, those with fewer than 12 years of service as of Dec. 31, 2017, or Air Force Reserve component members with fewer than 4,320 retirement points may choose to "opt in" to the BRS during the designated opt-in period from Jan. 1, 2018, through Dec. 31, 2018.

"The BRS is a major change for our Airmen," said Brig. Gen. Brian Kelly, the Military Force Management Policy



Reserve unit dominates at Hawgsmoke

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr. 944th fighter Wing Public Affairs

DAVIS MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz.-Pilots from the 47th Fighter Squadron with the Air Force Reserve Command demonstrated their experience and expertise on the ground and in the air by winning the Hawgsmoke 2016 competition.

Thirteen teams competed in biennial A-10C Thunderbolt II competition June 1-3. This year's event concentrated on two major areas: the tactical massing of fires in minimum time in an opposed environment, and conventional weapons delivery.

The winning 47 FS team included the flight lead Capt. David "Gnome" Knighton, Capt. Tyler "Mully" Shipman, Capt. Keith "Stool" Madson, and Capt. Simon "Honey Badger" Long. Capt. Knighton was selected as the overall "Top Gun" which is the first time in the history of Hawgsmoke the Flight Lead from the winning team was also the overall "Top Gun." Together they proved the 47 FS is the best of the best in the Air Force.

"AFRC's pilots are a very experienced group of aviators," said Knighton. "Even though the 47th FS team was comprised of the four youngest members of the squadron, we were able to put up some formidable competition amongst a very talented group of pilots. These pilots have dedicated their entire military careers to providing the best close air support possible to the front line soldiers on the ground.

I think, had our team not been brought up by such experienced A-10 instructor pilots, we would not have performed as well."

The 47 FS also won the last competition in 2014 when it was hosted by the 355th Fighter Wing also at D-M. As the previous year's winner it meant that the 47 FS was also the host of the event.

"Lt. Col. Brett "Zero" Waring's planning and execution of this competition surpassed all expectations putting together one of the finest and most well organized Hawgsmoke competitions I have ever seen," said Col. Thomas McNurlin, 924th Fighter Group commander. "To showcase Total Force Integration, Lt. Col. Waring is assigned to the 47 FS, but is one of our regular Air Force active associate members leading the mission for AFRC."

The three day event was kicked off with a solemn Fallen Hawg remembrance ceremony for fallen comrades. Following the reading of the

names of all fallen A-10 pilots, a missing-man formation flew overhead. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the participants drank a shot of whiskey then smash the shot glasses, in honor and remembrance of old friends and colleagues.

"This tradition amongst flyers dates back to World War I, when combat aviation first appeared in battle. After a mission, the survivors were given a shot of whiskey to calm their nerves," explained Lt. Col. Brett Waring, Hawgsmoke 2016 project lead.

The next day it was straight to business with four ships of A-10s from each of the 13 teams taking off and demonstrating their skills on the

all walked away learning more about employment options in such an environment," said Waring.

"Winning Hawgsmoke in 2014 was an incredibly proud moment for me," said McNurlin. "Being the first new unit equipped Fighter organization in AFRC since the 944th Fighter Wing stood up in 1987, we were working hard just to keep operating and not fail at the mission. When our pilots and maintainers went out there and proved they were the best in the Air Force, it quite frankly surprised me but definitely shows the quality of our Airmen in the 924 FG. I never thought

in a million years we would win it again much less almost sweep all categories of the competition. Our pilots, maintainers and their AFRC jets did an absolutely incredible job and definitely showcased the 924 FG, AFRC and TFI at D-M."

The first Hawgsmoke competition started in 2000, when A-10 units across the globe competed in ground attacks and target destruction.

"I would like to recognize our maintainers as well as those from our sister AFRC A-10 unit assigned to the 442nd Maintenance Group at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri," said McNurlin. "They volunteered to help and sent a significant MX footprint here to lead operations from Snowbird which was the only

way we were able to make this competition happen with our current 48 percent maintenance manning. I couldn't be more proud of what our Airmen have accomplished."

Below are Hawgsmoke 2016 results:

45 High Altitude Dive Bomb:

1. Capt David "Gnome" Knighton, 47th Fighter Squadron.
2. 1Lt Christopher "STYFLR" Shelley, 76th Fighter Squadron.
3. Maj John "Atlas" Meyers, 25th Fighter Squadron.

30 Dive Bomb, HARS (Heading and Altitude Reference System; degraded delivery):

1. Capt Tyler "Mully" Shipman, 47th Fighter Squadron.
2. Maj Jeff "Z" Sliwoski, ANG AFRC Test Center.
3. Capt Ryan "Slinga" Yingling, 104th Fighter Squadron...*results continued on page 9...*



Barry M. Goldwater Range. This year each team had to drop bombs on target and then conduct strafing runs. The pilots were scored on accuracy and ability.

Waring explained that the groups were tasked to 'mass fires' within a 10 minute window, with more than 60 individual targets and aim points. They had four tactical, overlapping threats to contend with that were appropriate for an opposed Close Air Support scenario that represented modern and legacy air defense systems (SA-15, 2S6, Roland II, and ZSU-23-4). Every unit successfully engaged approximately 20 targets within this window. The winners successfully targeted more than 30 while demonstrating an effective stand-off survivability with all manners of precision and accurate classes of weapons. The only restriction was, that they could not employ the gun.

"All of the competitors found the scenario to be extremely challenging tactically, and they



Wing News

Civic Leaders witness TFI first-hand

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr. 944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz.-The Air Force Reserve Command team-up with active duty components to show off Total Force Integration providing a unique experience for a group of Civic Leaders during a tour June 7-8.

Col. Kurt Gallegos, 944th Fighter Wing commander, hosted 27 Civic Leaders from around the country on a trip that highlighted the mission of Luke Air Force Base, Arizona and Whiteman AFB, Missouri during an overnight excursion.

“What an amazing trip,” said Tony Cerato, L.G.O. director and local community leader. “I give it a 20 on a scale of 1-10. My favorite part was witnessing the dedication and professionalism our Air Force men and women, both active and reserve, have for our country and their work in keeping us civilians out of harm’s way.”

The first day started with a mission brief at the 944 FW highlighting the mission of the wing. The group then loaded on to a KC-135 from the 452nd Air Mobility Wing at March AFB, California, and headed to Whiteman AFB. During the flight, the group witnessed mid-air refuelings with Luke AFB F-35 and F-16 aircraft. For most of the participants, this was a first time experience.

“The event was a perfect example of the continuing education of how our Air Force and military operates and the cohesion it utilizes

to accomplish its missions across the globe,” said Ron Sites, Fighter Country Partnership president and executive director. “We understand Luke’s TFI and seeing how it operates at Whiteman AFB was a positive thing to see.”

Upon arrival at Whiteman AFB, the group was greeted by Col. Brian Borgen, 442nd Fighter Wing commander, Col. Gregory Eckfield, 442 FW vice commander, and Chief Master Sgt. James Nudd, 442 FW command chief. Borgen briefed the group on the mission and told combat stories about the A-10C Thunderbolt II. Afterward, the group enjoyed time in an A-10 cockpit simulator and was given a tour of static A-10’s.

To end the day, the Arizona team met with local Whiteman AFB civic leaders and military member’s for dinner.

“Getting introduced to Whiteman AFB senior leadership and their local civic leaders also provided the opportunity to share best practices,” said Sites. “All installations and communities should be doing the same during slimming budgets especially as the requirement for manpower is increasing.”

The next day, everyone loaded onto a bus enroute to the 509th Bomb Wing for a briefing from Brig. Gen. Paul Tibbets, 509 Bomb Wing commander, on their mission, structure, and priorities.

The group then got to see first-hand a B-2



Spirit stealth bomber. They were divided into smaller groups and escorted by maintainers of the aircraft to provide information and answer questions about the aircraft and its capabilities. Directly from there, the group was loaded back onto the KC-135 headed back to Luke AFB. During the ride home, they again witnessed mid-air refueling, this time with Whiteman AFB A-10’s and B-2 bombers.

“I am still in awe of what happened the last couple of days,” said Christian Hultquist, Climatic, project specialist and tour participant. “I have memories that will last me the rest of life. Everyone we met was outstanding in every way.”

“I hope all our honorary commander’s enjoyed themselves and took away a better understanding of what it is we do, day in and day out,” said Gallegos. “I am proud of what we accomplished and our role as Reservists and I hope our group has a better appreciation for our Air Force.”

Arizona reservists bring manpower to Okinawa

By Staff Sgt. Nestor Cruz 944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

KADENA AIR FORCE BASE, Okinawa.-Citizen Airmen from the 944th Fighter Wing pride themselves with “bringing the heat” but for this year’s annual tour to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, these Airmen instead brought a force of approximately 80 to work with their active-duty brethren.

Airmen with the 944th Logistics Readiness Squadron and 944th Security Forces Squadron, along with various support staff, braved the sweltering humidity of the tropical island, to support members of the 18th LRS and 18th SFS and gain valuable on-the-job experience.

“Our purpose for coming to Kadena is threefold: to get some great training and experience, provide assistance to the 18th LRS and 18th SFS, and boost morale for retainability,” said Lt. Col. Kip Schlum, 944th LRS commander. “We want to give our new Airmen an idea of what it’s like to deploy.”

Part of the mission of the 18th Wing is to provide “premier counter air, air refueling, command and control, and combat search and rescue” and also to strengthen “regional alliances through joint, bilateral, and multilateral engagement and ambassadorship.”

Airmen from both active-duty and reserve sides of the house wasted no time in coming together and working on the mission at hand.

“We want to give our Airmen the chance to embed with an active-duty unit and receive valuable joint training with them,” said Senior Master Sgt. James Lindsay, 944th LRS superintendent.

Lindsay is also the assistant project officer for this year’s annual tour to Kadena, now dubbed as “Operation Patriot Habu” named after a snake species indigenous to the island.

Gaining valuable experience is the primary goal for this mission, but it’s also important for the visiting Airmen to leave a good impression with their American and Okinawan hosts.

“We want to leave a good impression and by the end of our tour, leave this island better than we found it,” Lindsay said.

Schlum agrees, saying his goal for his team is to be invited back to Kadena for another joint mission.

“My hope is our Airmen gets the training they need for their respective career fields and have the 18th LRS invite us to come back in the future,” Schlum said. “We need to work hard, have a good time, integrate with our counterparts, build relationships and be safe.”



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Barbara Plante



Carter announces policy for transgender service members

By Office of the Secretary of Defense Press

WASHINGTON (AFNS)-Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced June 30 that transgender individuals will now be able to openly serve in the U.S. armed forces.

The new Defense Department policy also establishes a construct by which service members may transition gender while serving, sets standards for medical care and outlines responsibilities for military services and commanders to develop and implement guidance, training and specific policies in the near and long term.

“This is the right thing to do for our people and for the force,” Carter said. “We’re talking about talented Americans who are serving with distinction or who want the opportunity to serve. We can’t allow barriers unrelated to a person’s qualifications prevent us from recruiting and retaining those who can best accomplish the mission.”

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James vocalized her support for the policy change.

“Transgender Airmen serve alongside us with integrity, service and excellence,” James said. “Today’s announcement is the first step in allowing transgender Airmen to serve openly, receive medical care relating to gender transition and allow transgender individuals to

join the Air Force. Our strengths as a military are the quality and character of our people and those things that make us unique are the same things that make us strong. In the coming months we will work diligently to fully implement Secretary Carter’s decision.”

The policy will be phased in during a one-year period. Effective immediately, service members may no longer be involuntarily separated, discharged or denied re-enlistment solely on the basis of gender identity. Service members currently on duty will be able to serve openly.

By Oct. 1, the DOD will create and distribute a commanders’ training handbook, medical protocol and guidance for changing a service member’s gender in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment System (DEERS). At this point, the services will be required to provide medically necessary care and treatment to transgender service members according to the medical protocol and guidance, and may begin changing gender markers in DEERS.

Prior to Oct. 1, requests for medical treatment will be handled on a case-by-case basis consistent with the spirit of the directive type memorandum and the DOD instruction issued June 30.

Over the course of the next year, the DOD

will finalize force training plans and implementation guidance, revise regulations and forms, and train the force, including commanders, human resources specialists, recruiters and service members. Peter Levine, the acting under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, will work with the military services to monitor and oversee this effort.

At one year, the services will begin allowing transgender individuals to join the armed forces, assuming they meet accession standards. In addition, an otherwise-qualified individual’s gender identity will not be considered a bar to admission to a military service academy, or participation in the ROTC or any other accession program if the individual meets the new criteria.

The full policy must be completely implemented no later than July 1, 2017.

To support service members, medical professionals and commanders during the implementation period, the DOD has set up a central coordination cell which will serve as a central point of contact for technical questions and concerns. The coordination cell is made up of legal experts, policy experts and medical professionals familiar with the issue.

(Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs contributed to this article.)

Airmen pay tribute to Pulse victims

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Lausanne Kinder, 944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz.-As the faded blue of the morning sky is greeted by rays of orange from the rising sun, bursts of pink, purple, blue, and yellow powder are tossed towards runners during the Pride 5k hosted by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender committee, June 24.

In the midst of color, runners don rainbow ribbons with a sheer black center made by Staff Sgt. Sharmaine Popa, 607th Air Control Squadron training instructor.

“I wanted to do something for the victims of Orlando,” said Popa. “Even if it was something small...”

Across the country from where the tragic shooting happened at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Airmen here paid their respects.

Master Sgt. Marta Turner, 69th Fighter Squadron NCO in-charge of personnel and administrative programs, was among the runners who appreciated the extra step the LGBT committee took.

“I think it’s great we’re wearing the ribbons to show our support for the Orlando victims,” said Turner. “We’re coming together for one another

despite being thousands of miles away.”

There was no trace of sadness at the start of the run, only cheering and excitement as the runners took off.

“That’s how it should be,” said Popa. “We’ll always remember but we’re also here to celebrate life.”



The LGBT committee also hosted a social which included guest speakers, food, and a raffle.

Popa hopes that in the future they can host more fundraisers and events.

“It has been a few years since the repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,’ but I think it’ll be a while before it’s more widely and openly accepted,” said Popa. “...it has to start with us [the committee members] because if we shy away from it, everyone else will too.”

Turner, agreed.

“I think people need to keep an open mind,” she said. “Ultimately the Air Force is one family. Active, Reserve, and Guard; we need to be united and support one another.”



Dietary supplements: Know what you're taking to avoid positive drug tests

By Bo Joyner

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga.-Air Force reservists should be careful when taking dietary supplements because of their potential health risks but also because they could lead to a positive urinalysis test result, according to officials with Air Force Reserve Command's Medical Services Directorate and staff judge advocate's office.

"You really need to do your homework and check with your doctor before taking any kind of supplement," said Dr. Don Jenrette, AFRC's Drug Demand Reduction Program manager. "And you should know all of the ingredients that are in any supplement you might be taking."

Dietary supplements are intended to provide nutrients that may otherwise not be consumed in sufficient quantities. The most common supplements are vitamins. Other popular supplements promise help in gaining or losing weight, or improving athletic or sexual performance.

Jenrette said he and his DDR specialists in the field are often asked if there is a list of dietary supplements that are banned or illegal for use by military members.

He said that Air Force Instruction 90-507 specifically bans any supplement that contains hemp, hemp seeds or hemp seed oil, but there is not a comprehensive list of banned supplements by name. He did say, however, that the Defense Department is crystal clear about what substances are banned for use by U.S. military service members.

According to the DOD's Human Performance Resource Center website, substances banned for use by Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Coast Guard members include:

- anything on the Drug Enforcement Agency's controlled substance list (this includes spice, marijuana, synthetic cannabinoids, amphetamines, mood-altering substances

and anabolic steroids);

- any substance the Food and Drug Administration has declared "illegal" or "not allowed" for use in dietary supplements (such as ephedra/ephedrine alkaloids, DMAA, DMBA and BMPEA);
- salvia divinorum (commonly known as diviner's sage); and
- any prescription drug without a current prescription written specifically for the individual.

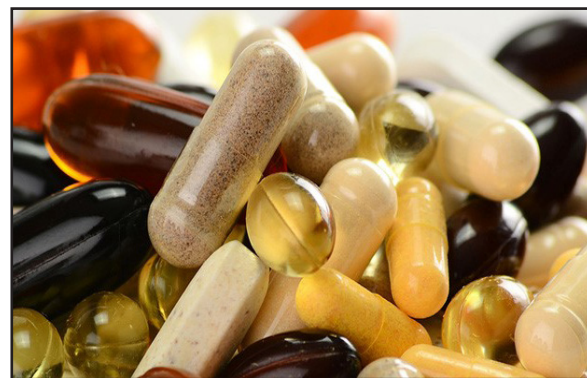
"Reservists who take supplements that contain any of the illegal or illicit drugs on this list are in danger of testing positive during routine urinalysis screening," Jenrette said, adding that some supplement companies may not list all of the ingredients in their products.

"Positive urinalysis results due to dietary supplement use can occur because products on the market may contain undeclared drug ingredients – that is, controlled substances that are not stated/listed on the product label," according to the HPRC website.

"The FDA has found that many dietary supplements – especially weight-loss, bodybuilding and sexual-enhancement products – contain undeclared drug ingredients that could be potentially harmful and/or produce unwanted urinalysis test results," according to the website.

Jenrette said reservists need to pay especially close attention to supplements that contain hemp seed or hemp seed oil. Hemp is the plant that naturally contains the substance tetrahydrocannabinol (THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana).

According to AFI 90-507, "Studies have shown that products made with hemp seed and hemp seed oil may contain varying levels of THC, an active ingredient in marijuana that is detectable under the Air Force Drug



Courtesy photo

Testing Program. In order to ensure military readiness, the ingestion of products containing or products derived from hemp seed or hemp seed oil is prohibited."

"Any product with hemp seed is prohibited," said Maj. Ryan Haslam, an attorney with AFRC's staff judge advocate's office. "Arguing that you popped positive for THC due to hemp seed use can still get you discharged because it is a failure to observe the prohibitions in AFI 90-507 and, as a result, a violation of Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice."

Military members should be mindful that products containing hemp seeds or hemp seed oil can be found at health food stores, including those located on military bases.

"Military members need to read the product label prior to consumption to make sure it doesn't contain hemp seed or hemp seed oil," Jenrette said.

Studying the label is good advice for anyone thinking of taking a supplement. Buying only from reputable, well-established supplement manufacturers is also recommended. Getting your doctor's opinion is another piece of good advice.

"Common sense is key when we talk about supplements," Jenrette said. "The best policy for Airmen is to be vigilant about what you put into your body. If you're not sure that what you are taking is safe and does not contain any

...Hawgsmoke results continued from page 7...

10 Low Angle High Drag Pop-up:

1. Capt Simon "Honey-Badger" Long, 47th Fighter Squadron
2. LtCol Alan "Lick" McCracken, ANG AFRC Test Center
3. Capt David "Gnome" Knighton, 47th Fighter Squadron

Long Range Strafe:

1. LtCol John "Karl" Marks, 303rd Fighter Squadron
2. Capt Ben Best, 107th Fighter Squadron

Low Angle Strafe:

1. Capt Josh "Tono" Woodard, 354th Fighter Squadron

2. Capt Max "EDDIE" Sery, 25th Fighter Squadron
Top Conventional Team (Maj Jeff "Burger" Watterberg Trophy) 47th Fighter Squadron
Top Tactical Team (Capt Steve "Syph" Phillis Trophy) 25th Fighter Squadron, Osan AB, Republic of Korea
Top Overall Pilot (LtCol Robert "Muck" Brown Trophy) Capt David "Gnome" Knighton, 47th Fighter Squadron
Top Overall Team (Colonel Al "Mud" Moore Trophy) 47th Fighter Squadron



From left to right: Col. Thomas McNurlin, 924th Fighter Group commander, Maj. Gen. Richard Scobee, 10th Air Force commander, Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Brandhuber, 10th Air Force command chief, and Col. Kurt Gallegos, 944th Fighter Wing commander, all pose for a photo June 4 during the 924th FG commander's call at Davis Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. (U.S Air Force photo taken by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr.)



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